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State Receives Funding To Develop “Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology”

HARTFORD—Senators Chris Dodd and Joe Lieberman, Governor John G. Rowland and U.S. Congressman John B. Larson today announced that Connecticut will receive a $1.5 million grant from the U.S. Air Force to form the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology (CCAT), a national center of excellence in science and technology research and development. CCAT will provide a national focus for innovation, collaboration and education that will lead and support the growth of the region's technology industry.

This two-year initiative is a partnership between federal, state, and local government, private industry and academic institutions including the University of Connecticut, Yale University, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) and others. The combined effort will focus on the development of the next generation of technological systems for both military and civilian applications as well as assisting other organizations in technology advances.

“This marriage between the state's best and brightest students and schools with Connecticut's defense leaders will both protect our nation and encourage economic growth,” said Dodd. “That's the type of long term relationship our nation ought to be encouraging, because it can successfully produce jobs, and ensure a strong and robust national defense.”

"As our nation finds itself in a world increasingly defined by the speed with which economic paradigms shift and technological revolutions occur, we must find new ways of stimulating innovation and competitiveness,” Lieberman said. “The Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology represents one of the most important and promising efforts responding to this need. It will engage government, industry, and academia in a uniquely collaborative effort, and leverage Connecticut's tremendous assets - our willing workforce, cutting-edge industry, and accomplished universities - into an well-oiled engine of economic opportunity."

“I'm proud to stand with Senators Dodd and Lieberman and Congressman Larson in announcing this initiative,” said Rowland. “This partnership focuses on Connecticut's high tech assets and will act as a catalyst for Connecticut's continued technological growth.”

“The Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology will emerge as a means to ensure vigorous economic growth for the state and region as we continue to establish ourselves as a leader in the fields of science, technology and education,” said Larson. “We have long envisioned a science, technology and education park at Rentschler Field and whether the field is fuel cells, jet propulsion or the nano-sciences, Connecticut can lead the way, and it is gratifying to see a vision beginning to take shape. In keeping with Governor Rowland's concept of industrial clusters, Connecticut is fertile ground for building a new foundation for science and technological development throughout the globe. The convergence of our academic, industrial and governmental resources to form a center for advanced technology gives us the opportunity to continue our state's proud history of being a leader in education, innovation and defense manufacturing.”

“The Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology will be a wonderful resource for Connecticut's economy and I am delighted that the University of Connecticut will play a key role in its development. Our strength in science and technology is a major resource for the state and it is gratifying that we can collaborate with Connecticut's academic business and governmental leaders in this venture. We appreciate the good work of Senators Dodd and Lieberman and Congressman Larson in securing this grant and we appreciate the confidence in UConn they displayed in assigning us a leadership role in this public-private partnership,” said President Philip E. Austin.

“Yale engineering is committed to advancing research and innovation within our labs and throughout Connecticut," said Dean of Engineering at Yale, Paul Fleury. "We look forward to participating in such opportunities that this planning study

will develop."

"Rensselaer, through its campus in Hartford, CT, is proud to be a collaborator in this endeavor," said Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson, President of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. "This center will be another catalyst for Rensselaer to further expand its Connecticut-based engineering and research programs, to drive economic development and to further the goals of creating a thriving hub for science and technology in the Hartford region."

"The future of our country, our state and our economy depends on the innovative development and use of technology," said Dr. John Cassidy, Senior Vice President for Science and Technology at United Technologies Corporation. "The changing and accelerating patterns of competition around the world demand bold thinking and daring actions to create a technological partnership among government, universities and industry. I am hopeful that today's announcement will bring together these three sectors to define new collaborative solutions."

The grant will be administered through the UConn Business and Law Schools and the process will be divided into three stages. The first includes establishing a steering committee and a planning team to review which technologies are well suited for development through the CCAT. These will include propulsion technology and possibly fuel cells, distributive power, photonics, biotechnology and materials technology.

The second stage will be identifying the scientific and technical resources that will be assembled and the financial investments that will be necessary for such an effort. The final stage of the completed plan will describe resources and partnerships that will be necessary for CCAT activities, address legal issues, explore ways to build and operate the "education pipeline" of scientists and technicians that will be needed and will identify the highest quality and most cost-effective way of linking the participants together.
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